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TO

FROM

AmEmbassy-Mexico

DATE November 2, 1961

SUBJECT

Transmittal of Carlos Fuentes' Articles: A Translation of one Published in Siempre!, Mexico City, Nov. 7, 1961 and a copy of one appearing in Holiday Magazine, Oct. 1,

One of the results of the Cuban crisis has been to flush some anti-United States, pro-Castro, pro-Communist Mexican writers out into the open. This was particularly evident in the first hours after President Kennedy's television statement of October 22, before either the Communist line or the official Mexican Government line had been enunciated.

One of the first birds flushed was Carlos Fuentes, a shrewd Mexican journalist who has heretofore successfully posed as an intellectual and as an "angry young man" interested in social progress.

Immediately after the statement of President Kennedy he rushed into print in the pro-Communist weekly magazine Siempre! with a vicious attack on the United States, calling the quarantine of Cuba "an act of piracy without precedent" and a trick to carry the November 6 elections for the Democratic Party. He wrote "the terrible aspect of the matter is this tangible example of the fact that, at each fresh U.S. election, the cheap politicians, for the sake of the most paltry and local interests, will take advantage of this lesson (i.e., that the American people were "thirsty for action") to create tension, and place the world on the brink of war."

He added that the American economy threatens the U.S. stay as a war footing, and this is an additional factor in

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the "manufactured" Cuban crisis; also that the crisis was invented to distract attention from the inevitable failure of the Alliance for Progress. "Can there be any other answer to the blind alley in which the United States finds itself?"

On the other hand, he wrote that Mr. Khrushchev "refused to fall into the U.S. war trap". "Khrushchev knows his cards and this time is playing them like a master. In the face of the most certain danger the world has known since the last war, the USSR has assured a concrete action in favor of peace and has left the United States in the role of war monger."

The magazine Siempre! is widely read by Mexican university students, intellectuals, politicians and government officials. A translation of Fuentes' entire article in the November 7 issue of Siempre! is enclosed.

The disturbing thing about Carlos Fuentes is that he is financially supported both by Communist elements in Mexico and by apparently naive editors and publishers in the United States.

Far from being an "angry young man", Fuentes is a dedicated, dues-paying member of the Communist Party who spends his time and talents in the communist cause. Many of his writings reveal indifference, almost contempt for the social and economic plight of the average Mexican, his countrymen. He is quite capable of producing a sophisticated article for a slick U.S. magazine for money. The most recent is a piece for the October issue of Holiday magazine, subtitled "Latinos vs. Gringos". A copy of that article is enclosed.

Fuentes' Holiday tone, evidently designed to attract American sophisticates, is gently ironic (in sharp contrast to his vicious directness in Mexican publications). He makes superficial, almost gay cultural comparisons, with his pathological hatred of the U.S. occasionally showing through in such passages as: "and the American woman is a love-starved blonde sleeping with her Latin casanova while her husband shoots photos or sells automobiles". He has gaily dismissed the crunching poverty and appalling hygienic needs of the Mexican with the airy statement that "the people of Mexico eat meals without forks and knives because food tastes better when the hand has felt it."

He sugar-coats the Mexican Communist pill for American readers as follows: "Land for the peasants, even if the United States thought it was banditry; expropriation of oil, even if it was called confiscation; State planning and intervention in the economy, even if it was called Communism..."

Perhaps the Holiday article's worst disservice to American readers was in printing his shrewdly bland characterization of life in the Communist-ridden National University, as if it were the normal give-and-take of free college life. He reports "warm, laughing, olive-toned girls in sweaters were swarming into the School of Philosophy. In the school auditorium there was a roundtable debate between Catholic and Marxist intellectuals; the discussion was furious but neither group spoke as if the other were evil incarnate or a menace to the country. In the patio of the School of Political Science an old peasant in huaraches was telling a group of students how the produce of the ejido, the collective farm, was bought by the private owners of mills at half its true value; he wanted the students to speak up for the collective ownership of the mills by the ejido. At a seminar in the School of Economics they were discussing the differences between legal and economic concepts in the United States and Mexico."

Fuentes is well aware that the Communist-dominated faculties of the Schools of Economics and Political Science effectively discourage the kind of free inquiry and objective discussion he describes. This is a little like reporting the suppression of the Hungarian Freedom Fighters as a spontaneous action by the Hungarian people or describing the Moscow trials of 1935 as if they were legal proceedings.

The Embassy is anxious that the character of Carlos Fuentes as a meretricious writer-for-hire as well as a dedicated anti-American, anti-President Kennedy pro-Communist should be thoroughly understood throughout the United States Government -- and that every effort be made to strip off the mask of the intellectual, progressive, and dedicated young writer which contributes to his success and prestige in Mexico.

For the Ambassador

Saxton Bradford
Saxton Bradford
Counselor for Public Affairs

Enclosure: *Wade*
1. Translation Siemore article
2. Copy Holiday magazine article

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TRANSLATION OF AN ARTICLE FROM SIEMPRE, Mexico City issue of November 7, 1962.

Mexico and the Crisis

López Mateos as a Mediator?
Two Paths Lead to War; One to Peace

By Carlos Fuentes

The rapidity with which international events occur these days makes the task of a political writer difficult, particularly when his copy must be delivered a week in advance of publication. It is at times like these that the need for daily publication of Siempre becomes manifest. Nonetheless, I shall risk some conclusions, conscious of the fact that the next 24 hours may substantially alter them:

The Attitude of the United States

What factors prompted Kennedy to declare the blockade against Cuba, in an act that violated the most elementary rules of international law, and which has placed the world on the brink of war? Yes: We affirm and reaffirm that the decision of the United States President is an act of piracy without precedent, which sneers at the prohibition against blockades in time of peace, violates the law of freedom of the seas -- which the United States has so often invoked in the course of its history -- and denies the freedom of international trade. However, for the President of the United States to have decided, as he has, to carry out these violations, which strip North America of all moral or legal prestige in the eyes of the world, can be variously explained.

a) From an internal viewpoint, Kennedy faces a congressional election on November 6. The support Kennedy obtains from Congress during the next two years -- and, consequently, his chances for reelection in 1964 -- will depend on the results of that election. Two weeks after declaring that he had "irrefutable evidence" of the fact that Cuba's arms were of a "defensive" nature, Kennedy, in the course of his campaign tours, realized that the election would depend upon some spectacular move against Cuba. This issue, raised by the Republicans as an undermanned political maneuver and fanned by the United States' powerful rightist press, became the touchstone of the campaign. Kennedy gave way to the hysterical crusade, faced up to it, and suddenly discovered that the Cuban arms were "offensive" -- as is launching pads for nuclear missiles could be set up in two weeks' time! Now, the display of force authorized by Kennedy satisfies the electorate's thirst for "positive action" and, if it assures victory at the polls, perhaps it will also mean the lifting of tension after November 6. The terrible aspect of the matter is this tangible example

of the fact that, at each fresh U.S. election, the cheap politicians, for the sake of the most paltry and local interests, will take advantage of this lesson to create focal points of tension and place the world on the brink of war. This gives us a dismal and dangerous spectacle of a credulous and aggressive people devoid of civic spirit; but even more dismal and dangerous (do things become) when their leaders abandon all responsibility and give themselves up to the pressures of a small but powerful reactionary group. The events we are discussing constitute a clinical case for the study of the modus operandi of the power elite in the United States: The mobilization of military and corporate pressures is achieved through the expression of the Republican Party's extremist policies and its total dominion over information media imposes and dictates the policies of the United States.

b) But the internal political factor becomes less important in light of the economic factor. I don't wish to repeat the brilliant arguments and information set forth by Nora Beloff a few weeks ago in the pages of LA CULTURA EN MEXICO. Half the budget -- 50 thousand million dollars -- and 10% of the U.S. product, are tied up in warmaking industries. Such an accumulation of nonproductive capital requires an occasional escape valve that will justify its very existence: It requires at least situations which bring the country to the verge of war, although many U.S. groups demand war itself. They are captivated by the fiction that a slight U.S. superiority in arms can assure victory in a thermo-nuclear war. Kennedy knows better; that a war would presuppose the extermination of the United States and of the Soviet Union. But he at least accepts the need for focal points of tension and even for localized wars, to provide slight relief from the pressures of military might.

c) Kennedy has been unable -- and will always be unable -- to present authentic proofs of the success of the Alliance for Progress in order to counteract conservative pressure regarding "positive action" against Cuba. The blockade is a clear admission of the failure of the Alliance. Unable to combat the Cuban Revolution with an example of evolutionary change from Latin America's old, semi-feudal structures over the capitalistic boss, the U.S. possesses no other weapon but that of force, devoid of reason. Can there be any other answer to the blind alley in which the United States finds itself? Because to leave Cuba alone, to allow her to develop her new collective life free from military and economic threats, would within a very few years establish too violent a contrast to irredeemable stagnation -- curiously accentuated since the proclamation of Alliance -- to the rest of Latin America, a prisoner of the contradiction between the real necessities of the underdeveloped countries and the inept formulas of superimposed capitalism.

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But, at the same time, the only out the United States sees -- the destruction of Cuba by force -- would simply have the effect of accelerating the revolutionary liberation of Latin America. It is not the first time in history that an empire has faced this dilemma: We have but to recall what happened to Spain, so powerful at her zenith -- as the United States is today -- and equally blind. One thing is obvious: The solution will not come from concessions and alliances promoted by the U.S., but from the revolutionary action of each Latin American nation, which will end by making the United States ultimately accept a new reality in the world.

d) Today, the course undertaken by Kennedy is the road to disaster: The blockade is merely the prologue to an armed invasion of Cuba. It is so planned. It is an initial provocation, the forerunner of more decisive moves intended to justify the armed intervention in Cuba of the United States and its Latin cohorts. If Kennedy thought the USSR would swallow the hook of provocation, he was wrong. On this point, we must analyze the Russian reply to the U. S. provocation.

The Soviet Attitude

When Nikita Khrushchev refused to fall into the U.S. war trap in the Caribbean by immediately accepting the solution proposed by Secretary General U Thant, he achieved a series of concrete objectives:

- a) He interrupted the advance of force which was leading, out of the blockade, to an armed invasion of Cuba.
- b) He placed the problem of negotiation within the UN.
- c) He proved with a concrete action the validity of the Soviet policy of peace and coexistence.

At first sight, it might appear that the U.S. has gained a propaganda and prestige victory by forcing the retreat of Soviet ships. For internal U.S. purposes, this is undoubtedly true, and should be very much taken into account in measuring the new pressures which, from the time this was done, the U.S. will exercise on Latin American governments (if these, always holier than the Pope, don't get ahead of the U.S. itself and convert the international power policy into another of internal repressions against leftist individuals and organizations in Latin America).

Nevertheless, in the long run it will be necessary to contrast the effect of an attitude which has violated international

law and has been on the point of provoking the third -- and last -- world war in order to crush a small nation of seven million inhabitants, with one which actually saved that small nation from armed invasion, and the world from conflagration -- a unilateral power attitude, assumed outside the code of international behavior created to resolve controversies, with one which has reinforced the strength of the international organization. I suspect that, in time, the bullying attitude will be weaker than the decision to maintain peace and carry the problem to the negotiation level.

Amid panic, emotional reactions abound. But two months from now it will be amply evident to all who want peace and who want war. It is no longer a question of more or less valid rhetoric, but of two policies based on concrete deeds. Khrushchev knows his cards, and this time is playing them like a master. In the face of the most certain danger the world has known since the last war, the USSR has assumed a concrete attitude in favor of peace and has left the United States in the role of war-monger. The influence of this fact on world affairs, and particularly on the spirit of the underdeveloped nations, will not be long in making itself felt. The peace theme has come down from the clouds of oratory to the solid ground of fact. From now on, the policy of pacifist forces in all the world will have to cling to that solid ground, and each new situation will put to the proof whether the peace which is preached can or cannot stand the test of events.

The Mexican Attitude

All of the above directly affects our country. Never, in the history of Mexico, had a Chief of State spoken with greater pacifistic emphasis, and under conditions more propitious for the conversion of those words into positive action, than did President López Mateos during his Oriental tour. Those of us who have insisted through the years upon the possibility of prying Mexico away from her traditional policy of isolation vis-à-vis the United States, and relating her to her natural community of support -- that of the underdeveloped nations -- can only applaud the letter and the spirit of the Presidential visit to the Orient. That the culmination of this trip should have been thwarted by the uncomfortable situation in which his North American colleague has placed him is not, to be sure, President López Mateos' fault, but it does again highlight the gigantic contradiction between the independent and pacifistic position of Mexico as expressed in Delhi, Tokyo, Jakarta and Manila, and the commitments of dependence and belligerence imposed on us in the Organization of American States.

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In fact, it is difficult to reconcile the statements made in the Orient -- on international law, the furtherance of a pacifist policy, nonintervention and self-determination -- with the half-hearted acceptance of their violation in the OAS Council.

Because, although Sánchez Gavito, the Mexican delegate, abstained from voting on the paragraph in the OAS resolution which sanctioned the North American blockade and the use of force in the Caribbean, a devotion to international law demands not abstention, but opposition to a flagrant violation of that law, since that is what is constituted by the imposition of blockades in time of peace and the unilateral suppression of the right of freedom of the seas.

For, taking article 6 of the Rio Treaty as a base, there is no justification for the appropriation of acts of force in the Caribbean or the convocation of the OAS Organ of Consultation. As Lic. Sánchez Gavito brilliantly maintained in December of 1961, the sine qua non condition for the application of article 6 of the Rio Treaty is that the inviolability or the territorial integrity or the sovereignty of political independence of an American state be the object of aggression. Only in that event will the Organ of Consultation meet, for the purpose of agreeing on necessary measures for assisting the victim of aggression. Have these conditions been fulfilled today? Can a sane mind believe that Cuba constitutes a menace to the territorial inviolability or the sovereignty or independence of the United States? Oh, it is maintained that Cuba -- something she has not yet demonstrated -- possesses "weapons capable of offensive action." Even if this were so, is it to be supposed that Cuba will attack the U.S.? Who defines the "offensive" or "defensive" nature of a weapon? The weapon itself is neither one thing nor the other; it becomes offensive or defensive according to its user, and in the case of the recent relations between Cuba and the United States, who has threatened whom? Who, for the last three years, has embodied an offensive attitude, translated into incendiary flights over Cuban cane fields, incursions of spy planes over Cuban air space, political and economic aggression, invasion landings on Cuban beaches? It is impossible to obliterate the sun of truth with the finger of legal trickery.

But above all it is impossible to continue compromising Mexican government policy, so clearly enunciated, on the altar of the mechanical vote of the OAS. It must be admitted, in light of the facts, that the OAS has ceased to fulfill the functions

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for which it was created and that the Rio Treaty ceased to have meaning from the moment its regional role was adulterated by United States membership in extra-continental military blocs in Europe and Asia. Mexico's true policy must be consolidated -- the policy which López Mateos authoritatively expressed in Asia, not the one Dean Rusk imposed upon us through coercion in Washington -- in the Organization of the United Nations, the only international organism capable of making it operational in a world where life is dependent upon the affirmations of coexistence and peace between diverse social and economic régimes.

True membership in the American community should be proved, not by submissive acceptance of the OAS councils, but by active participation on behalf of peace and in the name of Latin America's most lofty interests, in the United Nations.

There remains to President López Mateos a move which will salvage his historical responsibility in this hour and prove the usefulness of the support secured in Asia for our true policy. That move can be only a firm attitude of pacific mediation, perhaps supported by President Goulart of Brazil. If it be upheld in the United Nations and not in the OAS, such an attitude could open a new path, this one truly independent, to a foreign policy whose best objectives are being distorted by its worst commitments.

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Latinos vs. Gringos: Some Hard
Truths We Should Know About The
Mexicans

by Carlos Fuentes

Copied from October 1960 Issue
of Political Magazine

The American looks at the Mexican, the Mexican looks at the America - and what does each one see? A figure compounded of clichés. The American cliché of the Mexican - flickered in movies and popular cartoons - boils down to a lazy, mustached, swarthy man with a sombrero; a gentle, irresponsible child of nature who naps in the siesta under the sun; a Don Juan serenading a blonde girl in a palatial balcony; a villainous, gun-toting bandit staying benevolently in the shadows every weekend.

To the Mexican people, the gringo is either a naive, thick-skulled, dollar-lined tourist or a vulgar time-is-money business shark. And the American woman is a love-starved blonde sleeping with her Latin husband while her gringo husband shoots photos or sells automobiles.

So much for the clichés. In spite of their cardboard definitions, they indicate a contrast between the Latino and the gringo, not static or fixed to be sure, but rather a highly mobile one, created by differing values in their historic and personal lives.

Take for example the word success. The United States is perhaps the biggest success story the world has known. Nowhere, in its short time has a people risen to such heights of power, influence and affluence. Nowhere in consequence has a people been so bedeviled by ambition and greed, confidence and also, perhaps, in such a profound sense of their fate, by a certainty that its values and remedies are the best in the world and should be offered to other, and less fortunate, peoples.

But below the border, the key word, up to the 1910 Revolution, was failure. In Mexico, history has been tinged with bitterness, poverty, anarchy and national humiliation. And these, in turn, bred suspicion, rancor and fatalism; history is shadowed with defeat, it is a constant past. Mexico has been trapped in its history. In the United States, John Smith, Sir Walter Raleigh and Cotton Mather seem almost unimportant; legend and reality type as the past recedes back and is forgotten. But in Mexico the past is always present: the Indian civilization, the Spanish Conquest, the War of Independence, the Mexican Revolution, the French Intervention and the Social Revolution of 1910 and thereafter and thereafter fought every day.

Or what could be more contrasting than the American and Mexican attitudes toward sport: The American is concerned, quietly, with the practical value of the individual competition, of the result of the competition - victory or defeat. Take the bullring for example. The Gringo tourist asks, on taking his seat in the barrera, "Who do you think is going to win?" But for the Mexican, the bullring is a social, religious and historical symbol, not simply a spectacle of sixty thousand people sitting under the sun and in the shadow, watching a gold-and-purple marionette slay a dumb beast in a blend of pageantry and sadism. For the dark young men in the shirtsleeves, and fat old men with the straw hats, the dressed-up women in braids and satin, are witnessing, perhaps unwittingly the sacrifice of the bull to the sun.

The core of the Aztec faith - that the sun must be fed with a sacrifice every day lest it disappear forever one night - is being enacted once again in the center of the arena, but now fused with the Western belief that man through his own powers can dominate brute nature. The performance in the bullring is more than an act of courage; more than a display of pageantry. It is the reproduction of the conquest of Mexico, of its violation, surrender and rebirth.

Then the trumpets blare, the drums roll and the matador confronts the bull, the fury of blind nature; plays with it, step by step dominates it, slays it. Cortes, once again, has conquered.

The well-to-do smile; their alter ego, the man in the suit of lights, has shown his power. The others, the people accept: "the conqueror has conquered. But he has done it, this time, as an actor in the ancient ritual, in the sun sacrifice dictated by the Indian faith. For when the bull is dragged out - or eventually when the torn and bloodied bullfighter is carried away - both bull and the bullfighter are seen for what they really are: actors of the sun sacrifice, minions of the hot star now disappearing behind the dusky ring, sure to shine the next day.

If play in Mexico is packed with historical symbolism, so is religion. The Mexican believes that religion in North America is no more than a weekly investment in peace of mind and must not intrude on the practicalities of everyday life. But for the mass of the Mexican people, at shrines such as Guadalupe, Ocotlan, Cholula, Oaxaca, Atotonilco, religion is a central tragedy, the core of pain and humbleness, the altar of guilt and self-affacement. The peasants approach the shrines on their knees, their heads crowned with thorns, their necks and waists and ankles strung with spiky cactus leaf, moaning in their native dialects. They have come to adore the God who destroyed their own gods, the smoking mirror, the hummingbird wizard, the feathered serpent. They have come to worship the greatest God of all, whose soldiers broke the images of the old pantheon, and justifying no Huitzilopochtli, no Xochiquetzal could compete with this new divinity, the God who did not exact human sacrifice but instead sacrificed himself on a cross: the black Christ with shining silver eyes, His hands and feet nailed, His head shrieking with gore, His side slit and open. And beside Him, the brown-skinned Tonantzin, Mother of the Gods, now called Maria de Guadalupe, a goddess in tears.

Consider the bare, whitewashed imageless churches of the North; to the Mexican they seem soulless and sad, without the mystery or the joy or the decorative expressions of what goes on in men's souls. The Mexican people built their churches and decorated them in a baroque grandeur similar to that of the great Indian sculptures. Three centuries ago they were shown pious gravures by the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries. The Mexicans adapted the Catholic hagiography to their own tastes, their own colors, their own sense of drama, their own memory of the terror that a diety should inspire, their own wicked tomfoolery in mimicking the incomprehensible pink faces of the Christian saints. Again, the architecture and decoration of Mexican churches reveal the fight with a presence of the past, the struggle to redeem and surpass through color, splendor, gold leaf and carved-stone vines, the realities of hunger, sickness, pessimism.

Outside the Church, the people of Mexico eat meals without forks and knives because food tastes better when the hand has felt it. They sing sad songs about fleetingness of life, the difficulties and pleasures of love, the nearness of death. To the Mexican, death is an everyday affair, an ever-present memory and prescience. To the American - the Mexican thinks - death is a thing to be hidden, lest it corrupt the life with morbidity; death is the antithesis of life and is devoutly to be wished because it is long, free, comfortable and rich, death is a fate to be dreaded. So it is inevitable, when death comes in America, that it should be underplayed, hygienically disposed of, quickly forgotten, life awaits. Not so in Mexico.

In Mexico life is the other half of death. Death is alive. It is death that is longest when life is poor, sick and dreary. It is death that is to be wished when life is short and dismal. Life is a preparation for death; you do not live one more day, but one day less. Death is not the natural outcome of a fully lived life; it is the commonplace eruption of surprises, violence and disease. It is always around the corner; it walks hand in hand with life. Mexicans suck death in candy skulls, eat it in loaves of "death bread", play with its skeleton dolls, sing songs, celebrate it, practically make love to it. If I am to die tomorrow, says the Revolutionary corrido, why not die at once, today?

Tomorrow: What does the land of mañana mean? Not that things are put off until tomorrow, but that mañana is highly improbable and it is today that counts. Thus, it is the unimportant things that are put off until tomorrow: unimportant things that belong to the world of fleeting ambition: a bank account, a car better than your neighbors. Because mañana is so much in doubt, today is all-important. Only today can you drink, make love, sing a disdainful song, weave a beautiful basket that resembles no other basket ever made.

Compare all this

Compare all this with a major league baseball game in Philadelphia. Saturday afternoon at the Whelan's drugstore, Sunday morning at the Methodist Church in a Midwestern town; a normal working day on Madison Avenue, and you may have a hint of the drastic differences between the lives of Mexicans and Americans. Which does not mean, of course, that one is bad and the other good; it means only that they are different.

This is an important point. The Mexican suspects the fears and fears a tendency in the American to impose his own values on foreign peoples. Many years ago America called this tendency Manifest Destiny, and it resulted in the loss of half our territory to the invading armies of Scott and Taylor in what gringos call the Mexican War and Mexicans call the Yankee invasion, an invasion never forgotten by our people. Neither have we forgotten that it was a freshly elected Congressman from Illinois who defended Mexico in the United States Congress and put the blame of the War on President Polk and the ambitious cotton growers in the slave states. The cult of Abraham Lincoln in Mexico, if it does not surpass, certainly is as strong as that in America. And when Robert Kennedy calls for the Mexican War a not very bright page in the United States history, we might, perhaps, be grateful that he put the record straight, even though we might also feel a century is a long time for recognition of injustice; and we slyly wonder whether in another hundred years some future Kennedy (if the dynasty lasts that long) will not recognize mistakes being made today.

Perhaps the greatest mistake Americans tend to make is the innocent assumption that their values, because they have succeeded in the United States, are naturally universal and should be accepted willy-nilly by the less fortunate peoples in Mexico and Latin America. The American feels hurt when these values are rejected or when, once accepted, they fail. What could be more conflicting than the birth and growth of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin communities in our hemisphere. Take one Mr. John Brown, English colonizer of the 16th Century. He travels with his wife and children, fleeing from religious or political persecution. He is a Protestant, a free man of doubt and dissent. He believes in the new heretic doctrines that individual initiative is at the root of the wealth of nations, that man is fit to govern himself through democratic representation, that the good of the individual equals the common good. He faces virgin nature in a social vacuum, where no other civilization save that of hunters and nomads has flourished. He becomes the master of his own land, knowing that only through the personal ingenuity will the wilderness bear fruit. He is the creator of a truly New World, a truly original society, freed from the bonds of medievalism, armed with the novelties of the secular, humanistic revolution of modern man.

Take, on the other hand, one Don Diego Lopez, Spanish conqueror of the 16th Century. He is fired by the desire of quick riches, avid for the golden bounty of the Aztec Empire. He must destroy that civilization by fire and sword, conquer it and yet absorb it. Wifeless, he sires the mestizo children of the conquered Indian women. A scion of Spain, he

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imposes the old medieval dogmas of faith and class, sacks and strips off the resources of the conquered land to the Spanish homeland. His political belief is autocratic domination, his economic creed the privileges of a superior class to enslave labor, concentrate enormous landholdings, sweat and whip the mass of conquered Indians; his social creed includes only masters and serfs, and the serfs, naturally, shall have no expectation of education, health or advancement.

Mr. Brown's society could evolve: Don Diego's could be broken only through revolution.

Revolution is another key word that separates the Mexican and American characters. The highlights of Mexican history - 1810 Independence, 1827 Reform, 1910 Revolution - have been bloody, courageous, impatient and struggles to destroy the feudal bondage that the gringos has never known. It has been more than that, certainly. It has meant the Mexican's only way out to reach the threshold of modernity. Martin Luis Guzman, the Mexican novelist, called it: "The fiesta of the bullets", and the poet Octavio Paz wrote: "Like the popular fiestas, the Revolution, is an excess and a waste of life, a reaching for the extremes, an outburst of joy and abandonment, a scream of orphanage and jubilation, of sacrifice and life... And with whom does Mexico communicate this bloody fiesta? With itself, with its own being."

The Mexican Revolution was an unleashing of dormant energies, a joyful recognition of being: a vast surge from anonymity by a humiliated people who for the first time could name themselves, discover themselves and come into possession of their land, their songs, their colors. Broken, enslaved uprooted by the Spanish Conquest; frozen in their feudal bondage by an "independence" that separated them from Spain but not from the colonial structures of society; humiliated by foreign conquest and exaction that was disguised by transplanted imitations of American democracy, French philosophy and British economics, the people of Mexico had to have a revolution to begin the long, hard road toward self-identification.

Land for the peasants, even if the United States thought it was banditry; expropriation of oil, even if it was called confiscation; state planning and intervention in the economy, even if it was called Communism - we had no other way to destroy the feudal structure, create a basic internal market, use our own resources for our own development, tear from the denial of the old to the promise of the new.

Today, though still beset by enormous problems, Mexico is a progressive country, it is also by the way, the United States second best customer in this hemisphere. The fact that the United States acted with hostility and incomprehension toward the Mexican Revolution is still the best object lesson for today's new confrontation of the United States and the revolutionary hungry nations of Latin America.

in the process

In the process of the Revolution, Mexico emerged from its sorry past, enriched by its experience in defeat. It set itself the goals of hard work, social and economic progress, opportunities for all, education and freedom. It has a firsthand knowledge of what it means to be poor, sick, tragically debased. This has made Mexico particularly aware of the chasms that must be bridged in today's world. For if success is exceptional, defeat is common, and universal. Having lived through defeat and attained success, Mexico is the country from which Americans can best learn to understand the struggle in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for better life, under historical conditions that defy provincial America cure-alls.

The attitudes of the United States toward the world are illustrated daily by American visitors to Mexico. There is the Zoo-Watcher, the tourist who offends Mexicans by peering at them with the curious eye of the man on the other side - the right one - of the monkey's cage. There is the I carry-my-medical-kit and show-me-the-nearest-soda-fountain and where-can-I-get-cann d-American-food type of tourist, who should never have left Perioa. There is the romantic-Mexico-serenade-me-let's-have-more-Taquila traveler who usually makes a fool of himself. But there are also the young students, the writers, artists, ordinary intelligent Americans capable of participating in the life of the country, discovering the differences and, by understanding them, enriching themselves and their own communities.

Sometimes the values in American and Mexican life become inverted. Recently, I was listening to an argument between two friends; a romantic young American playwright and a practical, ambitious, hard-headed young Mexican lawyer. The American had come here to Mexicanize himself; the other was eager to Americanize himself.

The American was saying: "Never let the basic Mexico change. Keep it as it is for the day the American dream bursts and we have to look somewhere for the experience and root of death, guilt, defeat, collective life and common responsibility, basic grace and true beauty. Let there be this unchanging Mexico when America, through her complacency, her bland ignorance of the tragic life, her provincial unawareness of diversity outside the USA rips wide open and has to begin the pilgrimage from its isolated skyscraper to the wide world."

The Mexican lawyer was saying: "Our only way out is to become, as fast as possible, a second United States. We need their standard of living, their comfort, their tools and machines, their healthy conformity with the good things in life. All the rest is useless. Let's do away with these Mexican peculiarities. They're just hindrances."

All I could say was: Let's just try to be ourselves. We can be prosperous, modern, and at the same time healthily different. Good plumbing doesn't mean we have to sacrifice our identity. Squalor isn't the unavoidable breeding ground of beauty, leisure or a tragic awareness of ourselves and others. Perhaps we can have both the benefits of the

new and the values of the old. Look at these new workers in our national industries; they're modern, energetic, as far from the sleeping peon as anything Ford could imagine, yet they retain the human values, the personal intensity, the gifts we tend to identify with the old, irreducible Mexico my American friend loves and my Mexican friend detests.

We don't have to ape the best or the worst in the United States; we don't have to fear that a better life will destroy the identity of Mexico. We would lose all the wisdom that we won through our past experience in defeat and poverty, tragedy and death. And the United States would lose the nearest reminder that it has of the realities of life outside the affluent society; a practical, everyday reminder that life does not everywhere conform to the American plan; that the difference in social, economic and cultural values in today's world are not a simple opposition between right and wrong; and that the only constant in human nature, paradoxically, is change and difference.

And then we walked, talking as we went, from the old colonial houses in Coyoacan to the new, streamlined buildings of University City. The afternoon shone with deep shadows, the clear, stinging air of the plateau blended with the high sun to sculpture all things. A barefoot man was winding a song out of his musical cylinder. Warm, laughing, olive-toned girls in sweaters were swarming into the School of Philosophy. In the school auditorium there was a round-table debate between Catholic and Marxist intellectuals; the discussion was furious but neither group spoke as if the other were evil incarnate or a menace to the country. In the patio of the School of Political Science an old peasant in huaraches was telling a group of students how the produce of the ejido, the collective farm, was bought by the private owners of mills at half its true value: he wanted the students to speak up for the collective ownership of the mills by the ejido.

At a seminar in the School of Economics they were discussing the difference between legal and economic conceptions in the United States and Mexico. In the School of Engineering new technicians for the nationalized oil industry were holding a classroom debate on the best way to conserve and exploit the fields, not for wasteful booming export trade but for a rational use in Mexican industrial development. In the theater of the School of Architecture several hundred students were listening to a reading of poetry, from Mexican and European literature, on the theme of death. At the University stadium, ceremonial dances of the Aztec culture were being performed before forty thousand students. Everything around us - the glass walls; the lava-rock, pyramidal playgrounds; the bright flowerlike symbols of Mexico's stream of civilization wrought in mosaics - tended to hold together all the strands, dark and brilliant, forgotten and remembered, original and absorbed, of a country filled with diversity. Nowhere, in the people, in the architecture, in the landscape, was a sign of restless conformity to be seen. And yet, what harmony could contradiction beget?